

CHINA

Airport hub set for Yangtze Delta

Blueprint for development envisions network for transport across region

By WANG YING in Shanghai
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China is set to create a world-class airfield complex across the Yangtze River Delta region, according to a blueprint issued by the National Development and Reform Commission on Monday.

The blueprint, focused on high-quality integrated development of the region's transportation by 2025 and published on the NDRC's website, lays a solid foundation to improve the area's infrastructure and supports the integrated development of the area and the nation's economic growth.

According to the blueprint, a number of major projects will be rolled out across the region, including new airports in Jiaying and Lishui of Zhejiang province, as well as in Wuhu, Bozhou, Bengbu, Suzhou and Chuzhou of Anhui province.

In addition, the blueprint suggests the Yangtze River Delta region better adapt to the international trading environment and global

supply chain, improve its airport network and optimize its ports' ability to coordinate.

"The new situation requires the region to better cope with the new international division of labor and better serve the State development strategy; better support and lead the economic mapping and adjustment of the regional population; better promote the construction of a modern industry system and coordination among industries; better explore a new way of eco-first and eco-friendly development; and better master the world's new round of science and technology revolution as well as the latest trend of industry transformation," the blueprint stated.

"The Yangtze River Delta region has already formed an effective transportation network of airports, seaports, railways and roads that have greatly improved the region's attraction in the past few decades, and that is the foundation for future planning and development," said Zhu Ronglin, a regional planning expert from the Development

Research Center of the State Council and the NDRC.

Currently, travel between major cities across the region can be accomplished within 1.5 hours, and multiple transportation facilities enable goods to be shipped professionally across the region, according to the guideline.

But in accordance with higher standards of integration, there is still room for the region's transportation system to be improved, such as in the coordination of ports and airports, the service of the Shanghai international shipping center and cross-regional planning and operations.

"A highly efficient network requires closer connection between various transportation tools. That takes comprehensive planning to get different transportation solutions to work together, either for cargo delivery or for passenger travel," said Chen Zhuo, a senior analyst with China Merchants Securities.

Despite the region's outstanding transportation facilities among all city clusters across the nation, the further integration of the Yangtze River Delta region calls for a world-class airfield complex to support

transportation from the region to across China and the world, said Yu Hongsheng, a researcher with Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

According to Yu, the existing 20-plus airports in the region can hardly meet the demand for air travel for its 300 million people.

"The significance of aviation will be key for China as the nation becomes more and more international and further opens up its economy," Yu said.

Zhu suggested the development of an airfield complex should avoid homogeneous competition to make sure the airports are under coordinated management.

"Different airports should have their own clear function and positioning to differentiate one from another. In the meantime, their management must be well-coordinated, so that aviation transportation can work at high efficiency," Zhu said.

"The high efficiency of the integrated airfield complex is key for the region's economic development and business vitality. Therefore, a fine concrete plan from the central government is extremely important," Yu said.

Campaign to reduce workplace accidents

By HOU LIQIANG
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To reduce deadly accidents, the country will promote the use of automatic machines in some of the most dangerous industries in the coming three years while resorting to information technologies to intensify monitoring, officials said.

The Work Safety Committee of the State Council, the country's Cabinet, launched a three-year campaign on Thursday to "remove safety hazards at the root" and effectively curb major accidents in workplaces.

As part of the campaign, the country will endeavor to minimize the number of workers involved in the most hazardous parts in the chemical industry — one of seven sectors the campaign will cover — by promoting automatic machines, Sun Huashan, deputy director of the committee's office, said at a news conference organized by the State Council Information Office on Tuesday.

While accidents are also common in the chemical sector in Western countries, such accidents are more deadly in China, he said, citing the 2019 explosion that claimed 78 lives in a chemical plant in Xiangshui county, Jiangsu province, as an example.

"The biggest problem is our low level of work safety, with too many people involved in dangerous processes, posts and areas," said Sun, who is also vice-minister of Emergency Management.

Automatic, intelligent facilities will be used to transform the

industry so that fewer workers will have to work under high risks, he said.

Measures will also be taken to enhance management of the country's chemical industrial parks.

While raising the threshold for chemical plants to enter such parks and carrying out comprehensive risk assessment, China will ratchet up monitoring by establishing a system that can facilitate quicker, timely emergency response to any accidents in these parks and "stem them at the very beginning", he continued.

Shen Zhanli, spokeswoman for the ministry, said its fire service bureau and other relevant departments will soon roll out a joint screening effort that targets fire hazards in the sector.

The initiative follows moves by chemical companies to vastly increase their crude oil imports following a sharp decline in prices in the international market, thereby increasing the fire risks in their storage facilities, she said.

Li Haowen, an official with the ministry's general office, said similar transformations will occur in the country's coal mining sector — also a key target in the campaign.

The number of coal mine sections that operate with automatic, intelligent machines is expected to increase from the current 280 to 1,000 by the end of the campaign in 2022, he said.

A remote monitoring system will be established in all coal mines to enhance the country's hazard management capability, he continued.

E-tickets in use at all high-speed rail stations

By WANG KEJU
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All high-speed and intercity railway stations on the Chinese mainland will allow passengers to use electronic tickets, the country's top railway operator said on Tuesday.

With the adoption of e-ticket service on the high-speed line linking Lanzhou of Gansu province and Urumqi of the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region on Wednesday, all 1,075 high-speed stations will allow passengers to check in without a paper ticket, said the China State Railway Group.

The move will streamline boarding procedures and improve services, the company said.

When entering the station and checking in, passengers need only swipe an identification card — a second-generation ID card for Chinese mainland residents, a permanent residence permit for foreign "green card" holders, or a mainland residence permit or travel permit for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan residents — at the self-service counters.

736m e-tickets

have been sold to date.

Those whose ID cannot be read by the machines will be able to check in through the manual channel.

The service was introduced on the island-looping high-speed rail line of Hainan province in November 2018.

It was then promoted to the majority of the high-speed railway stations across the country during the fourth quarter last year.

After going through tests of the robust traffic during the Spring Festival, summer vacation and other holidays, the e-ticket system has been operating safely and steadily while garnering positive passenger feedback, it said.

To date, 736 million e-tickets have been sold, according to the company.

Also, as of Tuesday, disability certificate holders are able to buy discounted train tickets at 12306.cn, the official train ticket booking system.

The system has grouped disabled people with children, students and the military in online accessibility to discounted tickets.

Previously, disabled people had to go to ticket offices for such tickets.

Li Lei contributed to this story.

Terracotta Warriors come to Shandong



Visitors look at the Terracotta Warriors of the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC) on display at Shandong Museum in Jinan, capital of Shandong province, on Tuesday. The Qin-themed exhibition convened more than 140 cultural relics from around the country and will last until Oct 8. HUANG ZHONGMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Exec gets prison for banned chemical

By HOU LIQIANG

The country's top environmental authority reiterated the country's zero-tolerance policy toward the illegal production and consumption of ozone depleting substances as a local court in Zhejiang province handed down the country's first prison sentence for environmental pollution related to the chemical.

The legal representative of Minghe Thermal Insulation Material Co in the province's Huzhou city — whose name was only disclosed as Qi — was sentenced to 10 months in prison by the Deqing county people's court on Monday.

Qi was also fined 50,000 yuan (\$7,060), while the company was fined 700,000 yuan.

According to the Zhejiang High People's Court, the company had been using CFC-11, which has been banned in China since 2010.

The company also forfeited more than 1.4 million yuan in profits derived from its use of the chemical over the past three years, it said.

The case was unearthed during a two-month campaign launched by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment in 2019 to eliminate illegal production and consumption of ozone depleting substances.

Four other people from Shandong, Henan and Jiangsu provinces who supplied the substance to the Zhejiang company were also arrested, it said.

The ministry applauded the case as one that "fully shows the coun-

try's zero-tolerance attitude against illegal activities related to ozone depleting substances."

"The Chinese government has always attached great importance to international environmental conventions and has been resorting to strict law enforcement as a major guarantee to safeguard the achievement China has made in implementing these conventions," the ministry said in a media release.

China joined the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer in 1991.

Since China joined the protocol, the country's reduction of ozone depleting substances has accounted for about half the total reduction by developing countries, according to a previous release from the ministry.

Banquets: Public cautious about gatherings

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So she rescheduled with the hotel for September.

"There was only one day available that month for a wedding banquet," she said. "Everything was booked."

But she conceded she wasn't sure if even a September date would come off as scheduled. "It all depends on the epidemic. It seems we just booked a possibility."

Yuan Bao, sales manager at the La Belle Wedding Venue, a wedding planning company in Dalian, said: "We hope the ban on banquets will end soon. Meanwhile we have a Plan B for the business."

Plan B is the latest trend of online weddings, where the ceremony is broadcast on a video-sharing platform such as Douyin or Bilibili. That

way, the happy couples can celebrate with friends and relatives without worrying about the coronavirus.

"If the epidemic and the banquet ban linger, we might help arrange such weddings," Yuan said, adding that invited guests can send *hongbao* — gift money — through an online channel.

Large banquets are still banned in many parts of China where social distancing is still performed — including Shanxi province, Kunming in Yunnan province, and Beijing.

Wang Yiping, chairman of the Sichuan Wedding Trade Association, said that more than 10,000 wedding ceremonies had been postponed in Sichuan province because of the epidemic.

He expected the wedding market to rebound in the second half of this

year — assuming the pandemic is manageable and further relaxation of containment policies takes place.

On March 25, Sichuan announced an end to its temporary ban on group dinners, which was imposed earlier for contagion control.

But locals were cautious. Wang cited a wedding held the next day on the lawn of a hotel in Chengdu, the provincial capital. The couple slashed the guest list to 60, with five people sitting at each table (usually it's 10). The hotel also took strict preventive measures, including taking everyone's temperature and disinfecting the venue.

Outdoor weddings are gaining popularity, as they have better ventilation and it's easier to maintain a distance between attendees, according to industry analysts.

Outbreak: Pandemic far from over, WHO chief says

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The president cannot by law unilaterally change the date of the general election, which is Nov 3.

Trump also said he expected to see a lot of US schools reopen after being shut down by the coronavirus pandemic.

"Many (state governors) are thinking about their school system," he said. "Not a long way to go in the school system right now, for this season, for this year, but I think you'll see a lot of schools open up."

"Even if it's for a very short period of time, I think it would be a good thing," Trump told reporters.

"Young people seem to do very well," he added in an apparent reference to studies showing that children usually do not get as sick from the virus as older people.

"So I know that there are some governors that aren't necessarily ready to open up their states, but they may be ready to open up their school systems," Trump said.

Schools around the country have closed because of the coronavirus pandemic and many have switched to online instruction.

Trump unveiled a plan to help states ramp up widespread testing for the coronavirus. He said the US has done 5.4 million tests for the coronavirus, which he said was "double" what any other country in the world has done.

"We want to get our country open, and testing is not going to be a problem at all," Trump said.

As of Monday morning, 965,933 COVID-19 cases had been confirmed in the US, along with

54,877 deaths, a Johns Hopkins University tally showed.

According to a predictive model done by the University of Washington, which was often cited by White House officials and state public health authorities, the US death toll from the outbreak could exceed 74,000 by August.

Late on Monday, the university's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation model raised its projected US death toll to 74,073 by Aug 4, up from nearly 67,000 predicted a week ago, and 60,000 predicted two weeks ago.

Several states have eased restrictions on businesses, and more are ready to follow. Stay-at-home orders issued by governors and subsequent decisions to slowly reopen state economies have turned into highly charged political issues as the shutdowns have hampered the nation's economy.

World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned on Monday that the pandemic remains "extremely dangerous", although many countries now are seeking to return to normal.

While saying the pandemic is "far from over", Tedros called on countries to continue aggressive tactics, urging countries to "find, isolate, test and treat all cases of COVID-19 and trace every contact, to ensure these declining trends continue".

Xinhua and agencies contributed to this story.

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Free to hit the sea



Aquarium staff in Sanya, Hainan province, set two sea turtles free on Tuesday. One of Hainan's first aquatic wildlife aid centers, Sanya Atlantis Aquarium helps injured sea animals on a regular basis. SHA XIAOFENG / FOR CHINA DAILY